Volunteer

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THE PEACE CORPS VOL VIII NO 5 MAY-JUNE 1970

5

14

3
16
21
23

letters

To the Volunteer:

I noticed something in your article about extentions and early terminations (January-February *Volunteer*). All the Volunteers whose statements you printed who decided to extend were, in one way or another, using English—their native tongue—in their work. They were either teaching their language (Bryant, Wheatley, Tilden) or were in a country where English is spoken widely, if not officially (Flinn, Garviss).

However, only one of the early returnees (Jacobson) had anything to do with English in her program. Is this mere coincidence or important significance? Does constant contact and use of one's native tongue provide one with a safer—though perhaps less realistic—operating position, even a refuge? How does the language proficiency (in the host country's language) of PCVs working in English compare with that of Volunteers not working in English? Are the Volunteers of the former group able to pick up the cues and live the life that the latter group has to do?

Sincerely,
Kenneth Schiff
Former Volunteer
Berkeley, Calif.

To The Volunteer:

After reading the January/February issue, I felt as if I must share my "short" Peace Corps experience with others.

While in training, I felt sure that I could be a "successful" Volunteer. I reasoned that due to my technical ability, my ability to learn the language, and since I was accustomed to living away from home, I would fit into the new society with relatively few problems. After a few months in-country, I had many problems. Yet, when talking to other Volunteers and staff, I could not actually list any concrete facts dealing with these "great problems". So, after going to Washington, I terminated from Peace Corps as a failure in that endeavor.

I now wonder if I was actually a failure. If that means "an early terminee", then I was without a doubt a failure. If, on the other hand, I consider my new friends, my travels, and the experiences I enjoyed while in Fiji, I cannot classify it as a failure.

I learned more about the [U.S.] government's policies, the goals and ideals of foreign peoples, and more about my own desires than I had learned in the years preceding my service. And since, to me, a fruitful service is independent of length, I will not believe that I am a failure. While I was not a complete success, I feel I accomplished some things, and thereby was partially successful.

It is my hope that other "early terminees" will not feel all was lost. If nothing else, we became more aware of our own limits. If we did not realize this—how did we know when to say, "I cannot take any more."

Glenn N. Powers, Jr.
Former Volunteer
Austin, Tex.

The Office of Medical Programs Comments:

By considering a premature termination a "failure", the Peace Corps takes an organizational view, and makes no judgment about individual success or failure.

Mr. Powers argues that his travel, new friends and unique experiences lead him to believe he was not a "failure" because he prematurely terminated. But the loss of Volunteers—even though they may profit themselves by breaking their contracts—means a weakened program, unfilled explicit and implicit promises, and frustration for the host country government and its citizens. Thus, a teacher who joins the increasingly large "attrition group" may return to the United States a better and wiser person because of his experience in country X. But he leaves behind disappointed students, shattered expectations, and an unfilled program position.

To establish a credibility and to become a sophisticated organization committed to meaningful binational work on serious programs in the developing countries, we must be capable of long-term planning and commitments. Not to keep a contract is a "failure" for the Peace Corps, whatever else it may be to the individual Volunteer.

R. Curtis Bristol, M.D.
Chief Psychiatrist and
Acting Medical Director

To The Volunteer:

While we are not unconcerned with the philosophical aspects of being Peace Corps Volunteers and questions involving the goals and methods of the P.C., this letter deals with another urgent matter: the readjustment allowance. Since the inception of the Peace Corps in 1961, the readjustment allowance has continued to be calculated at a rate of U.S. $75 per month. Based on 27 months (two years service and three months training) the normal Volunteer would receive U.S. $2,025 before taxes and other deductions.

The pressing problem is that the readjustment allowance is no longer worth its 1961 value. One measure of inflation, the Consumer Price Index, shows an increase in prices of 31% between 1961 and the estimated 1970 level. Even after only two years of service, the returning Volunteer notes the increased cost of living. Many returned Volunteers face the problem of university costs which are increasing at an even higher rate than the cost of living. Whether the RPCV returns to school, looks for employment, or simply settles in an apartment, this allowance is becoming a continually smaller drop in the bucket.

At a recent Volunteer conference in Minas Gerais, Brazil, we discussed this problem. A petition signed by 23 participants has been sent to Washington. We propose that, in line with the Consumer Price Index increases, the readjustment allowance be increased approximately 31%, or to a rate of U.S. $100 per month, retroactive for those Volunteers now in service. We also suggest that future increases be provided to take inflation into account.

Michael Morris
Minas Gerais, Brazil

Editor's note: The Peace Corps agrees.

But there is no increase in sight for the coming (1970-1971) fiscal year.

The readjustment rate of $75 per month was set by Congress back in 1961 when the Peace Corps was first established. In order to raise it, Congress must amend the Peace Corps Act.

According to David Hoyer Director Joseph Blatchford called for such an amendment soon after his appointment last May.

The Peace Corps prepared the necessary legislation and submitted it to the Bureau of the Budget, as required, for approval.

Unfortunately, the Bureau said such an increase in readjustment pay at this time would be inconsistent with President Nixon's attempts to curb inflation and reduce government spending. At their insistence, says Hoyer, "we reluctantly deleted the increase from our legislative proposals."

There is a small bright spot, however, reports Hoyer.

By the Tax Reform Act of 1969, most Volunteers will be effectively removed from the 1970 tax rolls, provided their total income is less than $1700 dollars.

This will result in savings of up to $90 for Volunteers serving through 1970.

But will Washington press again in 1971 for an increase in readjustment pay?

"Yes," says General Counsel Marc Leland.

To The Volunteer:

I noted in your articles on the problems and "New Directions" of the Peace Corps that there was no mention of American foreign policy as a cause of the decline in the Peace Corps' effectiveness. This is an unfortunate and obvious oversight.

Undoubtedly, a majority of Volunteers and former Volunteers are dismayed by the fact that American foreign policy is largely insensitive to the needs, both economic and political, of developing nations; but aside from this, the omission of such an important aspect from a discussion of the Peace Corps' problems tends to increase the credibility of the Committee of Returned Volunteers' position that the agency be abolished.

I would also suggest that if the Peace Corps as an organization refuses to openly express the feelings of its constituency where the formulation of foreign policy is concerned, it will find itself serving a decreasing portion of that constituency as time goes on.

Tom Kelly
Former Volunteer
Washington, D.C.

To The Volunteer:

At a time when that portion of America which the Peace Corps once proudly claimed as its own speaks with painful eloquence against the invasion and destruction of yet another developing country it is incredible that on Connecticut Avenue it is business as usual.

While National Guard bullets kill college students, well-paid Peace Corps bureaucrats work silently in offices decorated with pictures of Asian children.

Younger than their counterparts in the State Department or the Pentagon one could once believe that these federal employees differed not only in age but in attitude. But during the greatest national crisis in their memory these longer-haired bilingual bureaucrats remained silent—as silent as the generals—as silent as the fat cats in AID, as silent as the dead children who so resemble the faces on EAP posters.

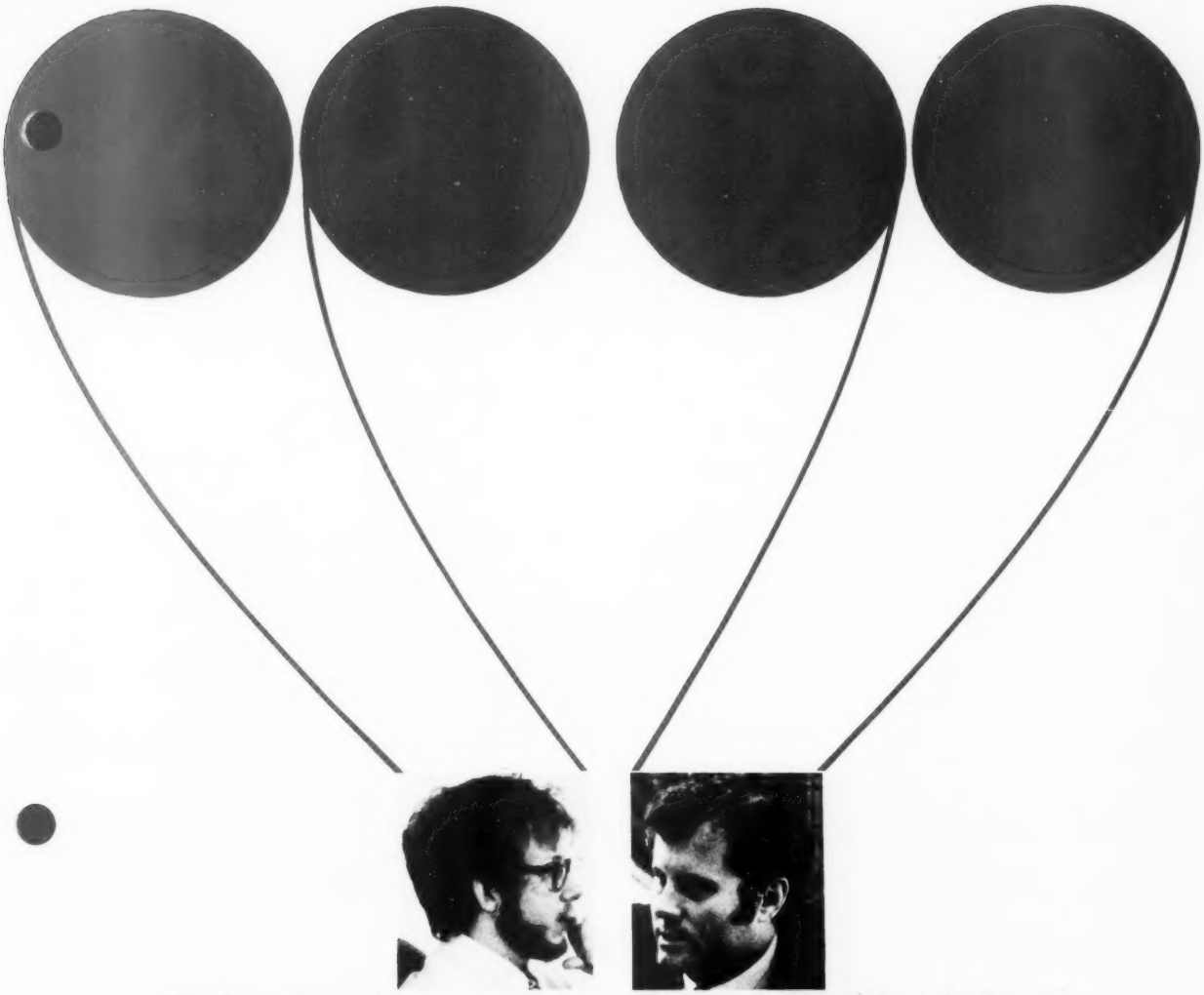
How many Peace Corps employees who say they oppose the war but continue to shuffle papers once criticized "host country nationals" for their reluctance to buck the system? How many once convinced villagers and farmers of the virtue of collective action to seek change? How many, even now, prattle about "growth in understanding" and "lever for change"?

As a returned Volunteer, as a former employee, as one who once tried to bring the Peace Corps "message" to the campus I am outraged that the only protest at the Peace Corps office came from the outside.

I am appalled that the Peace Corps has become just another fearful federal agency which by its silence supports murder.

But—most of all, I am deeply ashamed.

Nancy Sheehan
Former Volunteer
Washington, D.C.



Volunteer Interview Joseph H. Blatchford

by John Osborn

Joseph Blatchford, formerly of ACCION (Americans for Community Cooperation in Other Nations) and California politics, has directed the Peace Corps since May 5, 1969. Some say he is the most imaginative director the Peace Corps has had in its nine-year history. Others say he is trying to "Nixonize" the organization.

What is his background?

How does he stand on current issues facing the Peace Corps?

What are his plans for the agency as it moves into a new decade?

In January, the Volunteer *asked its correspondents to submit questions they would like to ask the Director.*

Over the next three months letters trickled in from Morocco, Ceylon, Bolivia, Fiji, Thailand, Tonga, Dahomey, Brazil, Uruguay, Colombia, Peru and Ghana, while the magazine went through a staff change and a major restyling.

In late April, I sat down with the questions in hand and put together an interview script, written to cover broad topics—dissent, the draft and "New Directions"—and Joe's personal philosophy of development. More specific questions, such as those dealing with the readjustment allowance or vehicle policy, were set aside for future articles.

On May 5, I took the script and, accompanied by Editorial Assistant Paula Mayo and photographer Susan Biddle, dropped into Joe's office for an interview session.

We could not have picked a worse time: a week after President Nixon's Cambodia speech, and one day after the shootings at Kent State University.

We talked for an hour and fifteen minutes, at which point I ran out of recording tape and Joe ran out of wind.

The transcript of our session was 42 pages long.

It's been cut by about 20 percent, dropping redundant passages and retouching everybody's grammar. Had there been more time and space, we could have talked for another six hours.

Joe is well-versed in Middle Eastern and Oriental religion. He is an opera fan, a serious one. He has strong ideas about the Peace Corps stemming from his work with ACCION.

He is an atypical Nixon appointee. He lives in Georgetown among Democrats instead of at the Watergate with Administration Republicans. He rides a motorcycle, does impersonations of famous people and has a great nostalgia for San Francisco and its "beat" period.

The three most prominent hangings on his office walls are: a photograph of his swearing-in by President Richard Nixon;

a copy of the earth-rising-over-moon picture taken by the crew of Apollo 8 in 1968; and a psychedelic poster of Bob Dylan. A unique office, but one gets the impression he would rather be out in the field.

Joe will be 36 years old in June. He and his wife, Winnie, a former ACCION volunteer, are expecting their first child in mid-September.

Osborn: This is the anniversary of your appointment [as Director of the Peace Corps], I think.

Blatchford: Yes, as a matter of fact. About this hour. It was the same kind of day. We had a nice day.

Osborn: As soon as you were appointed, you made a quick trip abroad to see Volunteers and to talk to some of the governments we're helping. You conducted a poll of returned Volunteers, you held task force meetings, and met your country directors in September. After that, you proposed a series of "New Directions" for the Peace Corps in the '70's.

Blatchford: That's right.

Osborn: Now, I think one of the "New Directions" which has created a lot of confusion is your call for Volunteers with more training and more experience in specialized jobs. Many people thought you were saying that you no longer wanted the young college graduate who had been a major part of the Peace Corps before. Is that really true?

Blatchford: No; it's not true at all. As a matter of fact, all of our press releases and all of my testimony in public record before the Congress emphasize that we consider the young person, single, out of college, as the backbone of the Peace Corps. What we will try to do is give him better training, better programming, where he'll have a specified job, fit into that job, be supported in that job by the local government, so that he can accomplish more than he's been able to. But he'll still be the main force behind the Peace Corps.

Now, unfortunately, though incorporated in all our press releases, that message is not in the newspapers. What's news is that farmers are going to join the Peace Corps. That's different from the public image of the Peace Corps Volunteer as a young liberal arts graduate right out of college.

When I went overseas, I constantly heard the cry from governments, people of all stripes—villagers, village leaders, school teachers and people who worked with the Peace Corps or were in charge of programming them—that, "We need a wide diversity of skills. We're more sophisticated in our development now than we were in the early '60's."

In the early '60's, newly independent African countries needed teachers *en masse* because they didn't have enough academically trained people to staff the civil service. So they put all their money into education and they asked for school teachers from all over the world to come.

As the decade ended a number of things happened. First, they found that they were training enough people for their civil service, in fact, training too many. Many countries said, "We're educating our revolution because we're training people academically without giving them skills which they can practice and use to earn a living." So now it's time to phase down some of that work and increase vocational training, agriculture, urban planning, and other things like this.

Second . . . nationalism. These new governments in Africa —I think the same applied to Latin America—were flushed with idealism. They were setting five and ten year plans in conjunction with the Alliance for Progress. They set al[illegible] visionary goals. And as those goals and hopes began to cr[illegible]ble, and as they saw that the process of social change, political turmoil . . . social change being too difficult, political turmoil not permitting them to even be in office long enough to project and accomplish these goals, they became disillusioned and they became more hardnosed and specified what they needed.

> ***. . . the young person, single, out of college, is the backbone of the Peace Corps.***

So the decade ended with, I think, overseas governments and institutions simply saying "We want Volunteers with more specialities, more experience"; and they told me this in no uncertain terms. The role of the generalist out of college—as teacher; as community development worker; as public health worker—is not up to their present needs. He is still needed, but not exclusively.

What I am saying is that everywhere, this is what the countries are saying, and too often our staff and our overseas people think that they've got the answers when their eyes aren't open and they're not watching the changing needs. They have to keep their ears to the ground and listen for change. And we have to be an agency which responds to that change.

Osborn: I think that's a point that's often missed. People think that the "New Directions" have just been generated here in Washington. But, in fact, it is a response.

Blatchford: It's a response to what I heard on my trips, what [Deputy Director Tom] Houser's heard, what our country directors have told us. We wrote a letter to everyone who worked for the Peace Corps and asked them for their ideas. We asked all our overseas staff and all Volunteers to write to me. We got hundreds and hundreds of letters in about a 60-day period which were all read. Out of that, plus the t[illegible] force's work, came the New Directions. Not everyone participated—you can't have 11,000 people all participate—but I'd say over 1000 did.

What's interesting is that those who came into the Peace Corps with Shriver in the very early days thought this was the original idea of the Peace Corps. In the beginning, they asked themselves, "How can we give an opportunity to A.B. Generalists when most of the requests will probably come for skilled workers, professional people, experienced teachers, agricultural degrees and so forth?"

But what happened was that they couldn't convince these skilled people to join the Peace Corps. They weren't interested. And that's why so many are saying today that we can't do these "New Directions" because people won't join. They're talking about their experience. They couldn't get them in the early '60's, but today's different. It's the opposite. Today Americans are more mobile. They don't stay in a job for 30 years. They move; they go; they want new horizons. They want the experience that the young guy gets. They're always saying to me, "It'd be great. I wish I were young enough; I could join the Peace Corps. I wish I didn't have responsibilities. I wish I didn't have a family. I wish I was just coming out of college; I could join the Peace Corps." You hear that all the time. So now we're simply saying, "Yes, you can. We'll twist and bend and make it so, because you're needed, and because you can make a contribution."

At the same time, the campus fellow who was there in the early '60's and available—his interest now has exploded into all kinds of other things. Some of them are still interested in the Peace Corps. Certainly enough to meet the demand. But so many others are withdrawing; searching for new things. They are concerned with urban problems; disenchanted with what government can accomplish or what they as individuals can do. The newness has worn off. Maybe they're waiting for some new call. Or maybe it will just be like the smoke drifting by and there'll be a renewed interest in this kind of thing. So that person is less "available". The rest of the country is opening up.

I guess the biggest criticism has been from some former staff people who have been quoted as saying, "This is really a disaster," or, "It's an idiotic scheme because you're taking the idealism out of the Peace Corps."

I think that's foolishness. I think that an American, at whatever age, who is willing to leave home and do this, knowing he's going to have to live differently, knowing he's going to have to live on a minimum subsistence allowance, giving up a career and a job to do this, is as idealistic as a person coming out of school who may not have any plans or any burdens or responsibilties. The question of motivation, idealism is always hard to judge and should not be applied to just those coming out of college.

But the main point is that countries are asking for these individuals, and it's the job and the responsibility of the Peace Corps Director and the staff to supply them and not to tell those countries what kinds of people they ought to have.

Osborn: Now, when you talk about skilled workers, what really do you have in mind?

Blatchford: What's usually associated with the trade skills: people who work with their hands; carpenters, machinists, plumbers; mostly the construction trades are what are called for overseas.

Osborn: What about graduates? Someone out of a business school or someone who has a Masters' Degree in computer programming.

Blatchford: Yes. In education there's a call for experienced teachers; people who have studied to be teachers or have the motivation and the practice in teaching.

Another category is professional skills. They would be your architects, lawyers, engineers, chemists, math and science experts, and so forth.

Then, we have agriculture, people with a strong agricultural background, or a degree, or those who actually were farmers, or are farmers.

Osborn: How did the Peace Corps ever become saturated with generalists in the first place if, as you indicate, there is such a great demand overseas for skilled people?

Blatchford: People tend to recruit people like themselves. Soon the Peace Corps becomes a homogeneous outfit internally. Those who are recruiting, processing applications, setting up application procedures, screening procedures, tend to set them up for the kind of person they imagine. In the past the Peace Corps has unintentionally discriminated and screened out members of minority groups, skilled workers, older people and so forth.

Take the language. The language test itself and the language course. Most older people probably couldn't get through that. They're not learning at the intensity level that a young college graduate is. And they're going to fall behind if placed in with 25 young liberal arts grads. They're going to fall behind and get discouraged, and they will bounce outside of the system.

Osborn: Does this mean that the FSI (Foreign Service Institute) language requirement for an older person training will not be as high as that for a younger Volunteer?

Blatchford: Well, I think we have to take a look at it. A person who is a teacher overseas has to have a degree of proficiency greater than a person who is working with his hands and is demonstrating. Some of the skilled workers who have gone overseas have testified to this. They have to be clued in to language, but they may not need the same degree of

fluency to begin because of their ability to communicate with their hands.

We had some Indian officials here the other day, and some of our host country recruiters have been up here. They made this point very strongly: that we should be more flexible in our language requirements because many people, farmers and so forth, need less actual fluency in language—because of the nature of their work—than others who are teaching math or something like that, and that we have to examine that possibility. The ability to communicate ideas is the main thing, and not to pass a certain language test.

Osborn: I've been looking at some of the matrix charts and as you say the requests for these kinds of people are quite high this year. How is the recruiting going? Are you getting these kinds of people in?

Blatchford: I think we'll be successful enough to feel it's worth pursuing and that it can be done. The big question is, in this first attempt this spring, can this be done? Is it ridiculous and impossible, and should we just stay on the campus with the B.A. Generalists?

I say, no, we can't for two reasons. One, these are the requests that are coming in and we have to honor them the best we can. That's what we've said we'd do, and overseas our creditability depends on it. Secondly, there are lots of other Americans that would like to serve and we shouldn't exclude them. After all, the Peace Corps was to represent American society abroad, to give everyone an opportunity for this type of service. We should give it all we have to try to get this message across. And we can't do it in one recruiting season. It's May and we're just getting some of our television and radio recruiting advertising out. People with careers and professions—jobs—are less likely to just pull up roots overnight. They want to think about it. Many of the people we're reaching now will decide in a few months and maybe join next summer. So, it's going to take time to change or enlarge and widen the image that the Peace Corps has. We're doing well enough to give us hope that it can be done.

This summer we have some 300 or 400 more requests from overseas, firm requests, than we had last summer. And, they mainly represent agriculture, trade skills and things like this. They'll be hard to fill. I'm not saying we will fill them all. But I think we'll get 80 percent of them.

Osborn: Last September you said that the Peace Corps is "lily white", and that you wanted to make it possible for blacks and Spanish-speaking people to join the Peace Corps. Has any progress been made on that?

Blatchford: Some. But we haven't really made enough. We haven't gone all out, and that's the only way we can really make an indentation. Applications from black colleges are up 70 percent this year. That sounds good. But in absolute numbers, what is it . . . 1 percent to 1.7 percent. That's still not good enough.

So we've just set up a special office of minority recruitment. I've got a letter right here to presidents of all black colleges asking their advice and support. We have two intern programs now with Shaw and Atlanta, and last fall we did send the first all black group of Volunteers to Kenya. This is the way of the future. Only we've got to put more effort into it. If we do, I think we can recruit 1000 black Volunteers every year. I think we ought to.

Osborn: Well, many Volunteers, and especially returned Volunteers wonder, will the older skilled indivduals be able to develop the close ties with their communities and to le the languages. You know, this is what seems to have characterized the Peace Corps in the past as different from A.I.D. or other organizations. What's your feeling about this?

. . . countries are asking for [skilled] individuals and it's the job of the Peace Corps to supply them and not . . . tell those countries what kinds of people they ought to have.

Blatchford: Well, too often the technical advisor of the past has been a very highly paid technician who doesn't live with the people, who lives like American businessmen and diplomats in the American section and doesn't learn the language and really deal with the people; who simply disseminates his expert knowledge in written or conference form to ministries who do with it what they want at the very top.

The Peace Corps hits a different level. It hits the lower middle class or the very poorest level of society. It deals directly with people. And, it will continue to do so. Communicating, learning a language, living modestly, getting to know people, is the *sine qua non* of development. You don't transfer knowledge and skills just on paper, you do it by this process of identification with the people you're working with. I think that should be the new direction of all American technical assistance in the 1970's.

Osborn: Do you still think there will be a distinction made between A.I.D. and the Peace Corps overseas?

Blatchford: There is a distinction, and there always will be. Now let's look at it in the eyes of the foreign national. When he thinks of the Peace Corps—he calls them kids or something—he thinks of young people working with the people. He doesn't think of them as part of the embassy or A.I.D. or our foreign aid program. That's good, and I think that will remain as long as whoever we bring learns the language, and works with the people. The countries ask for more skilled, more professional Volunteers, but they tell me they want maintain this people-to-people approach.

Osborn: In the 1968 Presidential campaign, I believe one of President Nixon's platforms called for closer coordination between various overseas missions such as A.I.D. and the

Peace Corps. Is there any attempt being made to merge our efforts?

Blatchford: No attempts are being made to merge the efforts. The Peterson Report and a number of other reports written on foreign aid, including those of a number of senators and congressmen, have recommended the complete dissolution or reformation of A.I.D. In this next year the future of that will be decided. I don't know what will happen to it. It may be stripped and broken down into parts. I recommended that technical assistance be taken away completely from political considerations; taken away from the economic considerations, the political support we give overseas. And certainly, by all means, it should be divorced from being in the same package with military assistance. Whatever military or short-run aims the United States Government has should be separated entirely from our genuine interest in providing technical assistance overseas. That should be non-political. It should not depend on boundaries nor should it follow our diplomatic relationships.

The President feels very strongly about that too. But he also feels that one of our primary responsibilities, my primary responsibility, ought to be to increase the contribution Volunteers make to the countries they live in, to make the Peace Corps less marginal to their development and more helpful to them on their terms. It's nice to have the experience that the American gets. This is one part of the Peace Corps. No one is negating that. But we shouldn't justify our existence overseas simply on the cross-cultural experience alone; on what the Volunteer learns when he comes home. That's educational exchange. And while I'm 100 percent for it, there is so much misery and poverty in the world that we can't justify the expenditure of this much money and this many people if we're not making a real contribution to a country. And that's where I stand; that's where I came from. I worked in Latin America for six or seven years and learned to look at the thing through the eyes of Brazilians and Venezuelans and Peruvians and I'm really interested, first and foremost, in whether anyone who comes into that country that I lived in comes to make a contribution. Otherwise, call it something else. Call it good will. And I hear this from Latins and others who say we've simply got to make the Peace Corps work better for them, not just for us.

Osborn: Let's go back to that. You call yourself a returned Volunteer since you spent so many years in ACCION working in Latin American countries. How did you first get interested in the idea of sending Volunteers overseas?

Blatchford: Well, I first got interested in it on a good will tour that I made through Latin America. Playing tennis exhibitions, trying to use sports and music as a door opener, handles as they say, to get to know students, politicians, labor leaders. We came back rather critical of American foreign policy and American ways of doing things in these countries. I saw the conditions and I saw the feeling of frustration that young people in Latin America had about not being able to forge their own futures. They saw many of their own elite in their own governments neglecting the social problems that existed. And they were frustrated, particularly when they saw a great power like the United States with very talented people and lots of money willing to align themselves with these governments, and not show any concern whatsoever for the really underprivileged and the poor *barrios* [city slums]. It seemed that with just a little less neglect and a little bit of concern and very small amounts of money and people that were willing to spend their lives there, that we might identify with their problems and help them. I thought the U.S. should do something and I didn't know exactly what.

I went back to law school and during the second year, in 1959, did a lot of reading on America. I wrote a lot of things and talked about a new frontier, and the need for young Americans to get involved. What would we do now with our lives? We needed some vehicle . . . we needed some vessel to put our energy and talent into.

I was reading an essay by William James. He wrote about war and the crowd mind and his opposition to the Spanish-American War, which was very well known. He wrote that militarism will always dominate a society because it's the only way of gaining the national cohesion which every society needs. The military gains great credence in times of war and plays a dominant role in society and the country tends to depend upon it, almost turn to it in times of emotional need. He said the concept of peace was alien to the American or western culture. And therefore, if war became impossible or absurd like it has since the Second World War, there had to be some kind of alternative; "moral equivalent", he called it; something which would stress the marshall virtues and the strife, difficulty and national purpose. And so he talked about conscripting the "gilded youth", as he called them, off to far-flung parts of the world.

I was tremendously excited by that idea when I first read it. I said to myself, "This is the answer. There is just no question about it."

It was soon after that I typed up a proposal which I later developed into a plan for ACCION.

Osborn: Back in the early days, when Sargent Shriver and the other people were first talking about voluntary action, you were one of those who said that voluntary service overseas should be run by a private organization of some kind.

And now you are Director of the Peace Corps, a government organization. How do you feel about private action as opposed to government action now?

Blatchford: Well, I have mixed feelings. I was on the platform at Notre Dame the other day with Harris Wofford. Harris is the man I came to see in Washington [in 1961]. We argued day and night. He wanted to make the Peace Corps a government operation. So did Shriver and Kennedy. They wanted a massive American presence overseas. It bordered on jingoism.

I thought a Peace Corps should start quietly. Eugene Burdick was working with me. And Burdick counseled me, when I first came up with the idea, "Don't go around making lots of speeches about it until you know what you're talking about." And I took his advice.

But Shriver said, "There's enough poverty to go around." It was all a very simplistic notion of how to fight poverty. We thought that it was probably a lot more difficult than that and we ought to quietly, in private, experimental ways, work the idea out for two or three years before announcing a massive program. We also felt that being part of the U.S. Government, we'd be suspect, that we'd be too bureaucratic, and that we would be hindered by American foreign policy and the embassies and all the other things that I had seen on my trip.

But Harris favored a government-sponsored Volunteer agency.

So we were on the platform together again [in 1970], and he was advocating that the Peace Corps be turned into a private corporation. I was standing up there as the head of the Peace Corps. We were on the opposite side of the thing again after nine years.

As I say, I have mixed emotions because I think it turned out so much better than I expected. The charge that we are government spies is still there. But I think the Peace Corps did a fantastic job and that Sargent Shriver did—in maintaining its independence. Volunteers were given a pretty free hand, and mainly because it was started by the President of the United States' brother-in-law. A very unique way to start any government agency. Not to be expected or anticipated. With that zest and push, it was really put on the map in big ways all over the country, all over the world, in ways it couldn't have been through starting small and starting privately.

But I still think it has problems, problems that have finally come home to roost. You can't have it both ways. We are part of the government and a part of the United States political system. That decision was made nine years ago. So, therefore, we do have to coordinate with other arms of the United States Government. There will certainly be suspicion on the campus or anywhere else that we are part of the government. That has to be overcome by all of us. The fact that we work for the government creates lack of trust. In the early days people believed in Kennedy and they believed in the mission of the United States Government. They believe less in this today.

So I have mixed emotions about it—being in this position.

Osborn: Well, the Peace Corps represents such a cross-section of American society, now, that I think we find ourselves of many different opinions about American foreign policy overseas. I was sitting in on a host country recruiters conference a few weeks ago and they themselves started talking about the issue of dissent overseas. One of the things they said was that they didn't want Peace Corps Volunteers to practice politics in their country. But they felt very strongly that if a Volunteer had an opinion, if they asked him a question, he should be free to respond. What would you tell Volunteers who disagree with the government or with some of our actions overseas right now? How can they express their disagreement?

Communicating, learning a language, living modestly, getting to know people is the sine qua non of development.

Blatchford: Well, I think, if they disagree so strongly and heartily that it really limits them emotionally from making the commitment necessary to do the job, they ought to leave the Peace Corps, come home and go to work for the opposition to the present government or whatever; dedicate themselves to it. If they still believe that the best way that they can serve intellectually and emotionally is to do what they're doing in the Peace Corps, they ought to continue and simply say what they wish; say that they don't agree. If they want to officially somehow register their conscience with their associates back home or colleagues back home who feel this way, they ought to be allowed to, but keep a very quiet profile overseas within the host country.

Most foreign nationals expect people to speak their mind when asked. People in the village, the teachers, those they are working with—Volunteers can talk to them like they were talking to anyone else. They can have an open discussion with the people they live and work with. No problem. It's an open society at home and that's the kind of society we want to represent.

Now, if they want to take more formal means, I think they should be taken "in-house." We have internal disagreements in this country, and I think we have an obligation not to thrust our dirty laundry upon the people we are working with, whether they agree or not. They don't understand, and in most cases, don't appreciate our publicly raising our foreign policy issues in front of them. So we ask Volunteers to go and visit the ambassador. We ask them to write petitions to me and to the President. These will be read; they'll be listened to

by officials in the United States Government. But to dedicate e and energy to public protests—they ought not to do it within the Peace Corps.

Osborn: Has the prolonged war in Southeast Asia had any effect on the Peace Corps?

Blatchford: I think the war has had a pervasive influence on all American society, and all our institutions are affected by it, all of our attitudes. We're so caught up in it, so desirous it will end as soon as possible that this, I think, influences the Peace Corps. The emotional, negative context of our involvement in this war spills over into many of the things that our people, our universities, and our government agencies, such as the Peace Corps, are doing in a positive way.

In my travels I don't find that other countries are caught up in it to the same degree. They read the papers, they wonder about the war and our involvement, but certainly they look at it more as an American problem, an American war, and, it does not affect the life of the villager, the *barrio* dweller, the average government official who is so concerned and worried about his own problems of finding the money and help to develop his own people.

Those of us involved in idealistic work are more naturally sensitive and susceptible on the issue. However, it is terribly important that the Peace Corps not become another casualty of the Vietnam war, and that we maintain its survival in this era of cynicism, and doubt, and crisis of belief in government and in our institutions, and that we continually work quietly and strongly for peace through constructive change in the lives of the people we serve. And then prevent, hopefully, future Vietnams, and future causes of conflict.

We in the peace Corps are interested in representing the idealistic and the positive, constructive emotions of the erican people in their desire to help people overseas, to work in cooperation with people overseas, to give opportunities to Americans to share the experience and rewards that come from Volunteer service. And we must champion and maintain that institution which provides this opportunity and try hard not to let it fall victim to the overspill of the war effort which is being carried on.

We must work quietly here and overseas—progressively—for the kind of change we believe in, which would include a swift end to the war, so that we can divert that amount of money and energy towards constructive purposes which this war has left undone.

But for the Peace Corps publicly to be an agency identified with one political stance or another on which the President has the right or wrong policy for ending the war would not be helpful to our efforts at this time, nor would it be well understood or appreciated by many of the governments that we work with.

Osborn: In your post as Director of the Peace Corps, do you consider yourself a member of President Nixon's Administration with an obligation to support his policies publicly? What degree of freedom do you see yourself as having within the Administration?

Blatchford: I was appointed by the President, and serve at the pleasure of the President. But he has given me a free hand to develop the ideas for making the Peace Corps a vital and exciting means of carrying out its original mission in the 1970's. He has given me plenty of backing on this. He has met with all our country directors. He met the other day with members of our national advisory group, some of our staff. He's spent a good deal of time with us emphasizing the importance of the Peace Corps, and he's particularly emphasized the importance of having returned Volunteers go to work on the problems of American society. In much of the criticism we've received from members of Congress, he's backed me up. And in our efforts to broaden the Peace Corps and maintain the right of free speech overseas, we've had his consistent backing.

I do not feel the obligation to do other than speak out forcefully for Volunteer service, for the concept of the Peace Corps, and no need to one way or the other insert the Peace Corps publicly into issues beyond its original mission.

Osborn: Do you feel any obligation to represent the views expressed in petitions from Volunteers overseas against the war to the President?

Blatchford: Yes, I do. And the Secretary of State and the President are aware of this and the Vice President. They are aware of the feelings of Volunteers, as they are aware of the feelings of young people, and I think I have a special responsibility to constantly champion and be a spokesman within this Administration for the viewpoints of developing nations and America's young people, let us say, idealists of any age. We must maintain our hope for what can be done and what must be done in this world.

Osborn: Have you forwarded the petitions you have received from Volunteers to the President?

Blatchford: Yes, I have, and I will continue to do so.

Osborn: Do you think it is wrong or unpatriotic for Volunteers to disagree openly with the official foreign policies of the United States Government?

Blatchford: No, I do not. A Volunteer retains all of his rights as an American citizen while he is overseas. That means he may express himself within the U.S. on American issues.

But when he goes abroad, he agrees to remain apolitical while serving in his host country, and therefore not to en-

gage in any political activity within that country.

All the rights he would have had if he remained in the U.S. —such as writing his congressman or senator, are retained and defended. I made that very clear in the letter I sent to all country directors in October last year.

Osborn: Many people see your program to recruit older, skilled workers with families as an attempt to weed out Volunteers who might be opposed to the war in Vietnam. Is that true?

Blatchford: No. Of course not. As I have said, our attempt to recruit greater numbers of skilled and mid-career Volunteers is a direct response to requests we are receiving from countries overseas, not to any domestic political pressure.

Besides, as I have also said, the recent college graduate remains—and will remain—the backbone of the Peace Corps.

Osborn: In May, President Nixon abolished all draft deferments. But at the same time he sent a proposal to Congress for an all-volunteer army. You've always said that you thought Peace Corps service or VISTA service or Teacher Corps service were just as important as military service and should be made alternatives to service in the army. How is that proposal doing in the light of all of the changes that have taken place in the draft system over the past year. Do you think that Congress is more ready to accept the idea?

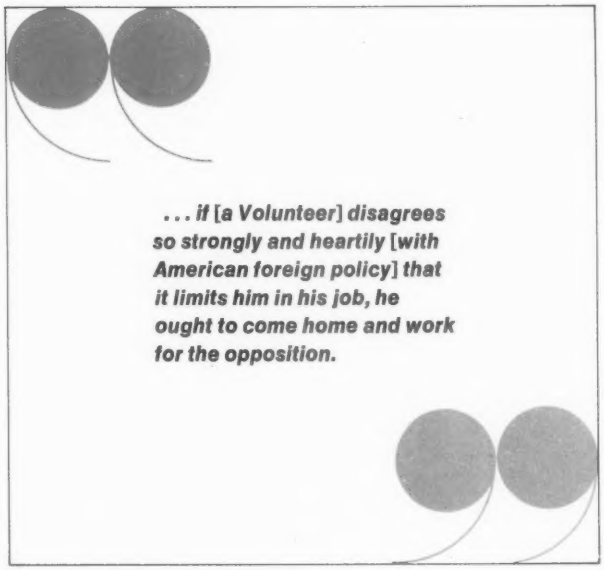
Blatchford: Well, as you know, this debate went on for several weeks and I fought very hard to either maintain the Peace Corps deferment or to defer military service of drafted volunteers for the duration of their work in the Peace Corps. The Secretary of State backed me on this and the President allowed us our second proposal. But only after quite an exhaustive debate within the government. I think this will be only a temporary measure. I hope that the President will go to an all-volunteer army and there will be no draft.

But let's assume for the moment that even after this war is over there's a peace time army; that there's still some kind of draft call. I advocated before Senator Kennedy's subcommittee that three years of service at home and abroad, three years of your life helping people overseas as well as at home, should be an alternative to the draft, and that you should be able to elect that alternative at age 18, 19, 20 or whenever you wanted to. I still think so. But I don't think it's fair to go ahead with this until this Vietnam shooting is stopped. While others are getting killed, it's not fair to totally exempt people from the draft.

Osborn: Let's talk about the Peace Corps as it moves into the '70's again. What would you like the agency to be doing over the next five to ten years? What would you like to see it become? Would you like to see it get back to its original size—say the size it was in '66 when we had 15,000 overseas—or do you think it should be smaller than that?

Blatchford: Well, we're going to do something very, very important right now. We're going to ask every country director to write a four year country plan, to totally assess where that country is; where it's going; what it needs in manpower assistance through Volunteer service. We've nine years experience in many of these countries and four or five in others. And we ought to be able to take this kind of a look. We expect three or four months devoted effort, and then we'll be able to say, I think, the numbers that we'll have overseas.

I don't believe in just recruiting lots of people, putting them overseas and finding things for them to do. I just don't.


. . . if [a Volunteer] disagrees so strongly and heartily [with American foreign policy] that it limits him in his job, he ought to come home and work for the opposition.

That's just not the way I look at it. I look at it from the other country's point: "What is the need? How can Volunteers serve?"

But, also, I don't think we ought to just go to a government and say, "Where are your needs? We'll hand them to you." I think it takes tremendous imagination to search through all the private agencies, voluntary agencies, private enterprises, government, universities, school districts throughout a particular country—Peru, Venezuela, wherever—and find all the kinds of jobs Volunteers could be doing—institution building; innovating in new types of projects, possibly in the environment, in educational television, in low-cost housing and vocational training—things that maybe that government isn't working on but they'd like to, if they could have some expertise and some Volunteers to develop new projects.

At the same time, there are many jobs to be filled. And I don't know, I think that—I'm guessing—there probably is a limit of maybe 20,000 or so Volunteers that really could be effectively utilized overseas. And I say "effectively" utilized. We have to be very cautious. We don't want to replace the French and the British in Africa with a kind of volunteer imperialism. We don't want to give the image suddenly that the British and French left but that there's all these Americans swarming all over the place. New countries terribly need to gain their own sense of identity, culture, pride in their institutions. It is terribly important that we stay in the background and help quietly.

For the next two or three years, it's more important to improve the quality and the diversity of the people that go into the program, and the contribution that we can make. If the numbers go down temporarily, that doesn't bother me at all, because the Peace Corps should be measured on what it can do in the eyes of the host country nationals.

Osborn: I thought of another question when you said you were going to ask the country directors to submit four or five year plans. One of the things that's always puzzled me is why

there is so much tension between in-country staffs and Volunteers. When I was a Volunteer, I often had the feeling that my country director wasn't really interested in what I was doing. I never saw him except for the occasional trips he'd make out around the country. I think many Volunteers feel that decisions are made over their heads. That they should have greater say. While staff members feel that Volunteers aren't really informed about how the decisions should be made and what the variables are. Is anything being done to try to bring staff and Volunteers closer together?

Blatchford: We're asking them to hold mid-service conferences, but I'm insisting that any policy decisions be communicated immediately to Volunteers. I think that there has to be a two-way flow. Volunteers have told us many things and I am insisting that those reports be read so that they go into the whole hopper of policy decisions when those policy decisions are made here. Washington offices have got to communicate with Volunteers. Oftentimes staff members are remiss in that they read these things and they study them and they're involved, but they don't go back and call the Volunteers together and explain it. We have an obligation to Volunteers to let them know what the Peace Corps is up to. We can't get mass participation in every decision. But we can weigh opinion from time to time and mainly communicate to them what we're trying to do and why. I think that's very important. Volunteers are very reasonable. They want to be a part of the Peace Corps.

I personally would like to eliminate—and maybe this is heresy—but I'd like to eliminate a lot of this giant gap between Volunteers and staff. The staff are always talking about a Volunteer like he's something in a gilded cage; some kind of a rare being filled with emotional sacrifice and dedication and with a completely different set of attitudes and background which we don't touch. Whereas staff are kind of hired hands, paid employees with responsibilities to help the Volunteer here and there. I think this is a certain mythology that shouldn't exist.

I think everyone in the Peace Corps, in a sense, is a Volunteer. How do you judge sacrifice or idealism or dedication to some cause? It's very hard to judge. To one staff member it may be sacrificing more than a Volunteer. I saw staff members work 24 hours a day practically, when I was in India. They were as dedicated and hard-working as I've seen anywhere. And I've seen the same with Volunteers.

Sure there's a hierarchy. Every organization this large has to have a hierarchy; it has to have a decision-making process; it has to delegate responsibilities. But I'd like to see distinctions eliminated. . . . Everyone is working very hard. They're all working for the Peace Corps; they're working for the government of India or Chile or Dahomey or Chad, and they're dedicated to that particular purpose. I think we're all really members of a team.

Osborn: One criticism made in some of the letters I received was that the Peace Corps overseas staff is so large compared to other volunteer agencies such as the British VSO's or the Canadian volunteers.

Blatchford: We're making a survey of this right now. We range greatly from one country to another in the size of our staff. And this eludes me at the moment. We hope that by the end of the summer we'll have a survey of this and be able to know what the size ought to be. And this will be included also in each country plan.

We've cut back the staff 10 percent overseas, as you know, and the Washington staff 22 percent in the last 12 months. This is just something that has to be done to any big organization every so often.

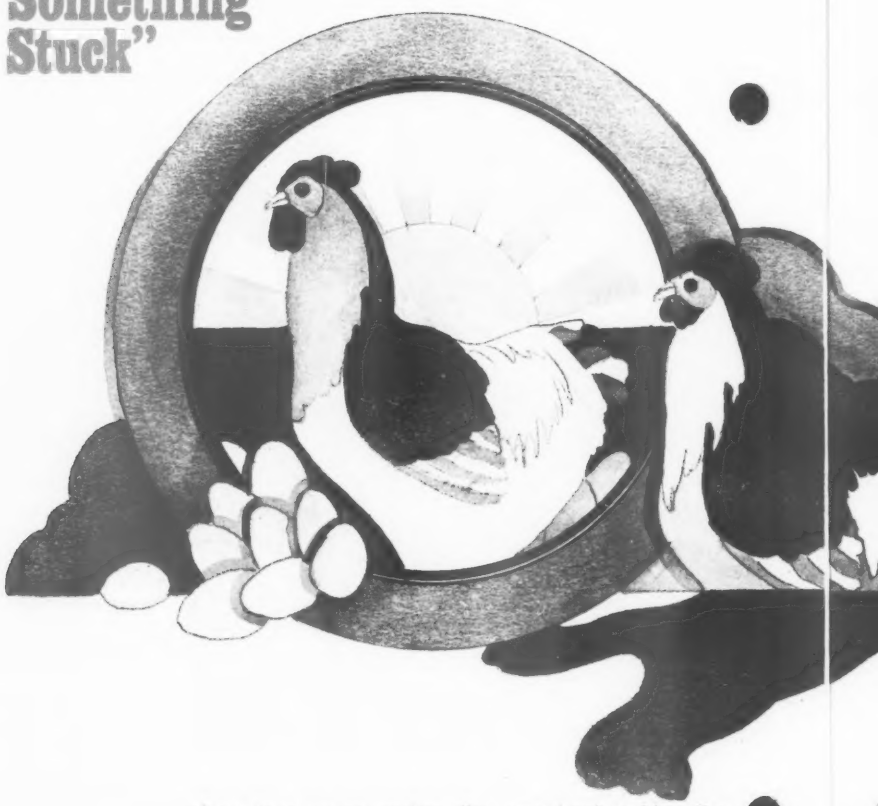
Osborn: One of the things I found out when I started doing research for the interview was that you never owned a car until you came to Washington, D. C., that you have always had a motorcycle. I was told the other day that you finally bought a family car for your wife [a Toyota].

Blatchford: That's right . . . . . that's the first car I bought. No, I bought a car for $125, an old Buick once in Berkeley; but I never used it. It blew up, I think, after a bit, one trip.

Osborn: Do you have any plans for after you finish with the Peace Corps? What does a retired Peace Corps Director do?

Blatchford: I don't think I've ever thought ahead more than six months. I feel very sympathetic and very strongly about some of our young people on campuses. I had dinner a few months ago with Tommy Smothers and Paul Simon and we talked about how young people don't feel they have a future. Future is a meaningless word. During the late '50's when I was studying, that's all anybody talked about. It wasn't: "Are you happy now? Are you enjoying life? Are you doing something you think is worthwhile?" Everything had to be geared to your future, to your career, to wherever you were going to be 20 or 30 years from then. That was the cry and I rebelled very strongly against it. That's why I took off . . . it's heresy to take off a year of law school right in the middle and go to South America. I told my parents, "Well, I'm going to learn Spanish —that'll help me in the future." That was a kind of bone I tossed to them and their way of thinking. But at that time I never thought about it; and I still don't. I don't think it's worth it. I never dated a girl five days ahead of time because I didn't know if I'd really want to go out when I got there. So it's the same way. I serve at the pleasure of the President . . . times the way they are now, you never know how long you're going to be here.

"Something Stuck"



by Thomas H. Claes

I was a Volunteer in India from September, 1964 until June, 1966. My colleague, Jim Kiser of Ponca City, Oklahoma, and I were members of India VII. We were stationed in the town of Hooghly, 25 miles from Calcutta, in the state of West Bengal. Poultry development was our job for 21 months, a pilot program.

Often I had the hope of returning some day to see how lasting our work had been, and to visit once again with our Indian friends in West Bengal. A tour in Vietnam as an Army Transportation Officer gave me that chance. I obtained a release from active duty while there, and returned to my old "stomping grounds". My experiences may be of some importance to the Peace Corps.

I left Saigon on August 28, 1969, arriving at Hooghly, India, a day later.

I borrowed my old bicycle from its present owner and pedaled out to the Chinsurah Agricultural Farm—a *Gram Sevak* (village level worker) training center. Five years ago, I had persuaded the principal of the center to build a Peace Corps style poultry house as a model for the students. The house was built in good order, but I could not persuade farm officials to stock it with high quality birds. We thought the use of "Arbor Acre" hybrid chicks would provide the best results. But the local authorities believed in using birds from another source that were of an inferior quality, due to successive inbreeding of local stock. The use of these birds proved to be a major frustration for many of our group. Now, three years later, I found the poultry house still standing, and "Arbor Acre" birds inside.

One of my biggest surprises came when I visited Mr. Kasinath Nandy, whom we had known almost from the beginning. We had tried to persuade him to work with us many times, but he had not been receptive to our ideas. In the last two months of our tour, my co-worker, Jim, went back to him. Jim reasoned that because Kasinath had many friends and some influence, he could become important to our program. Jim tried to persuade Kasinath and some of his friends to form a cooperative, but with no evident success. We left, and Jim thought that he had accomplished nothing.

A few days after returning to Hooghly, I walked up to Kasinath's house.

"So you have come back . . . I am so happy to see you!" he boomed out elatedly.

Over a hurriedly cooked omlette and a cup of tea, he asked about Jim and me, and then went on to tell about the poultry association that had been formed since we had left.

"We have 54 members and over 3,000 birds—mostly 'Arbor Acres'!" he said.

A few days later Kasinath and I bicycled out to a couple of remote villages to visit poultry farmers who were members of the association. Both farmers had fine poultry flocks—rather large ones at that. The management of each farm was very good, and the poultry houses were built well.

Other of our projects had not been as successful, however.

One of our best poultrymen had been Mr. B. N. Roy, who worked at the Dunlop Tire Factory, which was located a mile or so from our post. I met Mr. Roy after work one evening. "Hello, sir, how are you doing—I am so glad to see you!" were his words as we shook hands vigorously. We boarded a small boat at the *ghat* (dock) a short distance away, for a trip across the Hooghly river to Halisahar, where Mr. Roy resides. Since it was the monsoon season, the river was high and we did not have to leave the boat, and walk across a muddy sandbar to another as was necessary during the dry season. Instead, we were able to sail straight across.

"I am not in the poultry business at this time," Mr. Roy said. "Since my wife is staying in Calcutta with my son, who is studying there, no one is here to care for the birds."

At his house, Mr. Roy showed me the empty poultry house. "The flock that I had when you left here was fairly successful," he said. "Leokosis presented a problem for a short time. During the food crisis in 1967, I just couldn't produce enough eggs. The demand for eggs far exceeded the supply.

"I started a second, smaller flock elsewhere," he continued, "but that met disaster when a fox broke into the coop.

"Even though you do not see anything here now," said Roy, "the interest in starting poultry is definitely here. The time that you spent here was not wasted."

I visited Mr. Roy several times afterward and enjoyed the delicious vegetarian dinners of rice and chicken curry he insisted upon serving. Our discussions ranged on a variety of topics—from Vietnam to life in America.

"Of course, we are very curious about the U.S.A.—no Americans ever come around here!"

I thanked him for all the generous hospitality that he and his family had shown me. "That is all right," he said. "You have done quite enough."

There was another farmer across the river not far away—his name was Khagen Das. Das was also the owner of a small cloth factory in the town of Naihati. Arriving at his home, I saw that there was no longer a poultry house in his back yard. "I am much too busy to be in the poultry business now," he said. "But the flocks that I did raise were highly successful. Perhaps I will again start a small flock, on the roof of my house."

Chinsurah, several miles from Hooghly, was the site of another, now-non-existent, poultry farm—that of B. K. Neogy. "Mr. Neogy is no longer here," said his close friend, Mr. Mukherjee, the owner of a small garage on a main thoroughfare, which served more as a place of gossip and tea-drinking than as a place of business. As he bent over under the hood of a very old car, he told me what had happened.

"Mr. Neogy was doing very well in poultry. One day one of his chickens laid a double-yolked egg and there was quite a commotion—all the government fellows came by to get a look. Then, one night jackals ripped through one of the windows and destroyed the flock. Neogy sold the rest of his birds, and forgot about poultry."

While it was disappointing to hear the end result, it was interesting to learn that the program, and its operation and methods continued successfully after we left. I enjoyed Mr. Mukherjee and his buddies. We sat there in the garage for an hour talking about local politics, the U.S.A. and the Army. Mukherjee ordered a pot of tea and a dozen or so biscuits. "You must come one day for a meal," Mukherjee said.

I was gratified to see poultry farms—very large ones at that—situated in towns quite a distance away from my old post. How the owners were introduced to the idea, I do not know, but those farms were not there in September of 1964 when India VII arrived in West Bengal.

Something, some ideas, had, after all, "stuck". Politically, big changes had taken place—a coalition leftist regime was now firmly in control of the State Government. The Peace Corps was being asked to leave—the Volunteers, so said a local Calcutta newspaper, were suspected of being CIA agents. The hammer and sickle adorned many a wall and building. But the friendliness and hospitality of the people we had known there had not changed.

Tom Claes served for two years as a Volunteer in West Bengal. After returning to the States he enlisted and served three years as an officer with the U.S. Army Transportation Command. His tour of duty included a year on the docks of Cam Ranh Bay, Vietnam.

Now 27 years old, Claes has returned to civilian life, working in the Import-Export Division of the Hyster Company in Peoria, Ill. His former Peace Corps colleague, Jim Kiser, is now a second lieutenant in the Army.

news

Peru

On May 31, the north coastal region of Peru was hit by an earthquake which many now are beginning to describe as the worst natural catastrophe in the history of the western hemisphere.

Peru officials estimate at least 50,000 people—including two Peace Corps Volunteers—were killed by the quake and its aftermath, with hundreds of thousands left injured and homeless.

Lima, the country's capital, suffered surprisingly little damage, but high in the Andes, where winter is just beginning to set in, entire villages were literally wiped off the map.

One of those was Yungay, located in an area once called the Switzerland of Latin America. The town of 41,000 was buried entirely when a lake located above Yungay spilled over its banks, sending an immense mud slide thundering down on the town's inhabitants. Early reports indicate there may be as few as 3,000 survivors.

The epicenter of the quake was located in the Pacific, 42 miles west of Chimbote. The quake's force was the strongest recorded in 30 years—Perú suffers as many as 1,500 annually—but most of the deaths were caused by slides like that which buried Yungay, emanating from an area around the 22,205 ft. high Mt. Huacaran.

Hours after the quake, the Peace Corps sent out special telegrams to all returned Peace Corps Volunteer nurses with experience in Latin America, asking for short-term emergency help to care for the injured arriving in Lima's hospitals.

To date, over 450 have responded, but only 24 have been sent. Blatchford has made two trips to the country for President Nixon to assess the extent of damage and the needs of the Peruvian government for assistance.

From Lima, *Volunteer* correspondent Lucy Conger sent the following report: Each day brings new information on the effects of the devasting earthquake which hit many parts of northern Perú on May 31. New official figures, released June 8, fix the number of dead at 50,000 Estimates of the wounded and homeless have not been made, but they can be expected to number in the hundreds of thousands.

The hardest hit areas were Chimbote, a northern port of 200,000, and the Callejón de Huaylas, a long and deep Andean Valley. Huaraz, the departamental capital of the Callejón area is in ruins, with some 90% of the town destroyed. Two Peace Corps Volunteers, Marie Clutterbuck and Gail Gross were killed as their house collapsed during the earthquake. Both girls came into country in December of 1969. Marie was working as a normal school teacher, and Gail served as a home economist with the Ministry of Agriculture. Two other Huaraz Volunteers, Bob Persiko and Kent Breese, survived the shocks at their site. Ed Kahn and Richard Newfarmer, Lima Volunteers who were travelling in the Callejón, also survived and have returned to Lima after working for several days in the Huaraz hospital, provisionally located in the tourist hotel, one of the few buildings to have lasted the quake in Huaraz.

Peace Corps began immediately to assist in the extensive relief effort, working closely with international relief agencies such as the Catholic Relief Services and the Church World Service.

Lima Volunteers have transported food, medicines, and other relief materials to the stricken areas.

A group of ten Volunteers—architects, engineers, and generalists—are joining a technical assistance team of the government's Cooperación Popular Office, and will work in reconstruction. Cooperación Popular, with Peace Corps architect Steve Bender, has designed an igloo-like, earthquake-proof house which can be constructed in four hours. Eleven Volunteers from the northern regions of Perú are working at food and medicine distribution posts. Several women from Lima and other sites are cooking food in the disaster zones.

Four Peace Corps nurses, Volunteers in Honduras, arrived in Lima on Monday, June 8, and are treating the wounded. Nineteen RPCV nurses arrive in Lima this week to offer their services. More nurses, and other Peace Corps technical personnel, can be expected to come to Perú and assist the work.

Peace Corps Director Joe Blatchford arrived in Lima Sunday evening, June 9, as Nixon's designated coordinator of American assistance contributions. After several days of briefings and meetings, he and Peace Corps Perú will plan a large-scale program of relief and reconstruction work. Perú Director Ed Baca, has stated that the disaster is of such magnitude that all Peace Corps resources from Peace Corps Perú or the U.S. will be geared toward providing all possible assistance to Perú.

On June 10, the government announced the creation of a Cabinet-level Commission for Reconstruction and Rehabilitation to coordinate and plan all national and extra-national efforts in the devastated areas. Peace Corps Perú will work with this Commission in planning its contribution to the long-range programs.

The immediate response to the disaster has been extensive: food, medicines and blankets have been flown to Perú in shipments of hundreds of tons from countries the world over. Latin American countries (including Cuba) were among the first to respond with offers of assistance. Within Perú, donations of relief supplies and cash have been staggering. A grave problem has been that of transportation—roads to the northern coastal towns have now been repaired, but transportation to the Callejón has been possible only by air. The [illegible]port of that mountain region was flooded, and supplies have been airlifted in by helicopter. The U. S. aircraft carrier *Guam* is expected to arrive in Lima on June 11 with 17 large helicopters. A painful aspect of the tragedy has been the difficulty of getting necessary supplies to the remote, hard-hit areas, and the lack of communication with many areas which were undoubtedly damaged severely.

The relief and reconstruction work will be a prolonged effort. The Peruvian government, in its meetings with international assistance agencies, talks of maintaining feeding programs for nine months; reconstruction, of course, will take much longer. Despite the tremendous collaboration and assistance programs, the damaged areas will truly never be the same again.

More recent reports indicate that relief work in Peru is proceeding smoothly.

But there is still a great need for money, medical supplies and clothing.

Winter in the Andes is hard, and the Red Cross is pleading for blankets, sweaters, jackets and overcoats for victims of the earthquake.

Cash donations should be sent to either the National Center for Volunteer Action, 1735 Eye St., N.W., Washington, D.C., 20036, or the Peru Earthquake Relief Committee, Suite 310, 1755 Massachusetts Ave., Washington, D.C. 20036.

Peace, Politics and Blatchford.

May and early June were times of turmoil in the United States. The war in Indochina took a new and dramatic turn, and the bitter debate over American involvement there flared once again with a violence that shook the nation.

The Washington offices of the Peace Corps, long an island of calm in a city of confrontation, were not spared this time.

And in Peace Corps assisted countries around the world, there was new evidence Volunteers remain deeply concerned about their country's policies in Southeast Asia.

Throughout this season of discontent, Director Joseph Blatchford was forced to respond to at least three constituencies: congressional and government officials who want him to cool Volunteer dissent overseas; the Committee of Returned Volunteers (CRV), which views the Peace Corps as part of a "worldwide pacification program" and wants to close it down; and Volunteers (perhaps three-quarters of the overseas force) who want Blatchford, acting as their spokesman, to take a strong stand against the war.

Many feel that in the past Blatchford has leaned too much in the direction of the first group, pulling the entire agency into domestic political issues by doing so.

The events of May and June forced Blatchford—and everyone else in Washington headquarters—to listen closely to the voices of the others.

On April 30, President Nixon announced he was sending American troops into Cambodia. On May 4, four students were shot by National Guardsmen at Kent State University in Ohio. And on Friday morning, May 9, as demonstrators poured into Washington to protest those events, 16 members of the New York CRV chapter—including Paul Cowan, RPCV-Ecuador and author of *The Making of an UnAmerican*—managed to occupy and seal off the fourth floor offices of the East Asia and Pacific region (EAP).

While other Committee members and returned Volunteers picketed the building entrances below, the New York group taped up posters and banners on EAP windows and unfurled a Vietcong flag.

One large banner, in red, declared, "Liberation not Pacification." Others proclaimed solidarity with the Black Panthers, Bobby Seale, Ho Chi Minh, Che Guevara and the Chicago 7.

A mimeographed statement passed out to employees arriving at the building to begin work urged them to leave their jobs "until the war in Indochina, the war against black Americans, and the war against dissent end."

It also urged Volunteers around the world to "terminate their employment . . . and return home where they can struggle most effectively to defeat imperialism."

Employee reaction varied. Some were sympathetic, others puzzled, suddenly unsure of their own position as government workers, and some were angry.

It was the Vietcong flag which provoked the strongest response.

As word of its appearance on a federal building spread around town, Blatchford began receiving calls from congressmen, citizens and government officials urging him to pull it down and arrest the individuals responsible for its display.

A few staff members managed to pull one flag down with a nail-studded board. But the CRV's were well-supplied and another was flying within minutes.

Blatchford then attempted to persuade them to take it down. But they refused and, rather than provoke confrontation, the Peace Corps let it fly.

A bomb scare emptied the building later that afternoon of everyone but senior staffers and CRV's, but many people lingered on into the evening to see what would happen, talking among themselves and demonstrators in an oddly relaxed street forum.

As it turned out, nothing happened.

Although the occupation was played out against a weekend of demonstrations and considerable tension in the city, restraint by both Blatchford and the Committee prevented any dramatic confrontation from taking place.

Blatchford refused to accede to any of the demands of the Committee, but he also resisted considerable pressure from government and city officials for their eviction from the building.

"I think of the story that could have been rather than the story that is," said Africa Regional Director Walter Carrington in a later Washington staff meeting.

"That story could have been that there was violence at Peace Corps headquarters and Peace Corps headquarters beat heads of former Volunteers. And with about a hundred thousand demonstrators here in Washington, Peace Corps could have become the focal point for violence that could have engulfed the entire city."

For their part, CRV members inside the building and out cooled groups of passing demonstrators who expressed a willingness at times to storm the building and take it over entirely.

But in the end there was no confrontation. The 16 Committee members who had occupied the building left quietly 36 hours later and drifted into the night.

In a final statement, the Committee expressed satisfaction with the impact of their occupation. "With this first extended occupation of Federal offices," they said, "we shut down one of the agencies of U.S. foreign policy for a day and a half."

The following week, members of the San Francisco Committee of Returned Volunteers attempted a similar action in that city's recruitment offices. But there, unlike Washington, the occupation soon broke down into a lengthy rap session between CRV's and Peace Corps personnel, some of whom were returned Volunteers themselves.

Throughout this turmoil, however, Blatchford remained aloof from the central argument being made by demonstrators across the country: that U.S. involvement in Indochina is wrong and must stop.

At a press conference held in Washington on May 9, the following exchange between Blatchford and reporters took place:

QUESTION: Mr. Blatchford, what is your position on the Cambodia invasion?

BLATCHFORD: As Director of the Peace Corps, we have not and should not . . . And I have told our Volunteers that Peace Corps itself cannot become involved in foreign policy and make judgments and decisions as to whether we should make certain moves or should not make them.

QUESTION: What about as an individual?

BLATCHFORD: As an individual, certainly I sympathize with a lot of the feelings of young people.

QUESTION: With regard to the war in Cambodia?

BLATCHFORD: I think with regard to all of the war in Southeast Asia.

Our mission is so clear cut in this administration, to work in ways in which

Volunteers present petitions and letters bearing over 300 signatures against American policy in Indochina to Director Blatchford. From left, Rory Bolger and Carl Proper, Panama, Hugh Rogers, South Korea, and Bob Vila, Panama.

this will never happen again.

QUESTION: Again, getting back to you as an individual, rather than as a spokesman for the Peace Corps, do you think the President's action announced last week was the proper one?

BLATCHFORD: I really can't speak, you must understand that; I am the Director of the Peace Corps and any public statements and any public pronouncements before a press conference would certainly be construed.

As Blatchford was saying those words, however, Volunteers were preparing to send letters, petitions and even representatives to Washington to argue that it is the war in Indochina which is being "construed", construed by their hosts as the true measure of America's intentions in countries overseas.

The events of May set off as much anti-war activity among Volunteers and staff as either of the fall moratoriums. But it was restrained, and, in form, unprecedented.

Volunteers presented letters and petitions to local American officials. Some wrote their congressmen.

In Panama, Volunteers decided to send a representative to Washington to talk directly with Blatchford about the impact of the war on their work, and they sent letters to all 57 other Peace Corps assisted countries urging Volunteers there to do the same.

As a result of that campaign, many more letters and petitions poured into Washington throughout the month of June, from Nepal, India, Venezuela, Guatemala, the Dominican Republic, Tonga, the Caroline Islands, Botswana, and Peru, containing a total of more than 500 signatures, all told.

Two other countries, Korea and Venezuela, joined Panama in sending representatives, paid for out of the pockets of Volunteers.

Two of them arrived in Washington on June 2: Rory Bolger, 22, a coop worker in Panama City, and Hugh Rogers, 26, a teacher of Anglo-American law in Seoul, Korea. Both strongly urged Blatchford to speak out publicly against the war.

Rogers told the *Volunteer* that Volunteers in Korea were "concerned about our increasingly hypocritical position of supposedly working for peace, while our government is building up this senseless war."

Bolger said Volunteers in Panama felt the same way.

Both also reported concern in their countries about the apparent Peace Corps attempt to repress dissent abroad, as evidenced particularly in articles published in the March-April *Volunteer*.

In their meeting with Blatchford, the Volunteers said, they had asked him to lobby for peace, "like the secretary of defense lobbies for war."

"We also asked him to look upon us more as his constituents and not just try to please the conservative members of the House," Rogers added.

Two other Panama Volunteers were present at the meeting, Carl Proper and Bob Vila, both on vacation in the States.

Vila took notes and reported that when asked how he viewed his responsibilities as director, Blatchford replied: "I see it as my responsibility to lobby within this administration not for foreign policy but for the underdeveloped countries and their programs."

Was Blatchford opposed to the war?

"I don't believe in war," he reportedly answered.

What would President Nixon's response be if he took a public stand on behalf of Peace Corps Volunteers against the war?

"He (the President) would feel that a member of his team was not supporting him."

Later, their meeting over, Blatchford opened his doors to a Washington *Post* reporter and photographer. "Do you permit dissent by Volunteers overseas," the reporter asked.

"Sure," Blatchford replied. "This kind of dissent is fine."

Would he present the petitions and letters to President Nixon?

"Yes, I intend to," he answered.

When?

Blatchford said he hoped to do so at the forthcoming session the President was scheduled to have with the National Advisory Council on June 16.

"His answers did not entirely satisfy us," said Rogers, as he and the other Volunteers relaxed later in their Washington Hotel room. "We asked him to be more specific and to keep more in touch with the Volunteers in the field."

Added Bolger: "We're convinced now Blatchford won't be lobbying for us. It's up to us now to do it for ourselves."

After meeting with Senators George McGovern (D-S.D.) and J. W. Fulbright (D-Ark.), and other congressmen, the Volunteers scattered, returning to their countries of assignment at the end of the week.

The Venezuelan representative arrived three weeks later, but was unable to meet with Blatchford who was in Peru helping estimate the needs of that country in the wake of a disastrous earthquake (see story above, "Peru").

Instead the representative, Jack McKenna, 27, a city government advisor working in the town of Cabudare, talked with Deputy Tom Houser.

McKenna later told the Washington *Post* he thought the form of protest in which he and other Volunteers were now engaging was "more effective than public dissent abroad."

"In Venezuela, old suspicions of the Peace Corps are beginning to return as a result of the war in Indochina," he said. "We are accused often of being CIA spies, and this has intensified since the Cambodia invasion."

It is difficult to measure the impact to date of Volunteer dissent.

All the petitions and letters were forwarded to the President on July 2.

As for the Director, at the end of June he was deeply involved in relief operations in Peru, a cause which was at once dramatic and clearly apolitical.

Congress

Despite strong words on Capitol Hill and mild paranoia in the halls of Peace Corps Washington, the agency's 1971 authorization and appropriation requests are doing well in both the Senate and

the House of Representatives.

The Senate has authorized the Peace Corps to spend $90 million in the coming fiscal year (July 1, 1970 to June 30, 1971), and approved legislation to enable use of some of those funds to support Volunteer families overseas.

The House Foreign Affairs Committee has reported out a similar bill with a $98.8 million spending ceiling, the amount requested by the Nixon Administration in February.

And although the House Appropriations Committee cut the recommended figure to $80 million, Congressional observers expect the final amount will be in the neighborhood of $90 million by the time the bill is acted upon by the full House and Senate and sent to the President for signature.

Nevertheless, there are signs of discontent on Capitol Hill.

For the past year the Peace Corps has been under attack from both liberal and conservative congressmen. The liberals are worried the Peace Corps is being "Nixonized", to use the words of a Washington columnist, and the conservatives are upset over reports of Volunteer opposition to the war in Vietnam.

But it goes beyond that.

Some senators, such as J. W. Fulbright (D-Ark.), are weary of all American involvement overseas, a weariness brought on by the long war in Indochina and the Senate's inability to influence developments there.

Some representatives, such as Otto Passman (D.-La.), see the Peace Corps as a haven for "long haired beatniks and hippies." Upset by youthful protest at home, they are inclined to discipline any agency closely identified with youth.

Finally, some congressmen do not believe that after nine years the Peace Corps has accomplished very much in the way of development.

A crucial test of congressional support for the Peace Corps in the House came in late May, when Rep. H. R. Gross (R.-Iowa) introduced an amendment in the House Foreign Affairs Committee which would have required the Peace Corps director to terminate anyone working for the agency who engaged in protest activities directed against policies of the United States government.

Supporters of the Peace Corps, however, managed to alter the amendment's language to merely permit the director to prescribe regulations "to insure that no individual performing service for the Peace Corps . . . shall engage in any activity determined by the director to be detrimental to the best interests of the United States."

That one passed by a vote of 12 to 10, but several members of the committee, including some who had not attended the session, immediately drafted a supplementary report asking that it be dropped from the final bill.

The Congressmen said the director already had the authority to set such regulations, and criticized the amendment as "superfluous verbiage and unnecessary legislation."

They added: "Because the Peace Corps is so closely identified with youth . . . this amendment can only be construed as a slap at dissent among our young people."

There is a good chance now the amendment will be killed entirely when it comes up for a vote before the full House.

If it passes, however, it is doubtful the Senate will let it stand.

Final action on either the authorization or appropriation bills is not expected before the end of July.

The current fiscal year ended June 30, 1970.

Suffrage

General elections are scheduled in all States and territories of the United States on November 3, this year.

Many states are also holding primary elections, some as early as May and June, others as late as September and October.

Voters will elect a new House of Representatives, 35 senators, 31 state governors, and countless other local and state officials.

All Volunteers and staff members are eligible to vote by absentee ballot. To do so, however, you must apply to your state of legal residence.

How?

Bill Boyd, of the Personnel Division, recommends the following procedure:

Write to your nearest American Embassy or Consulate—Attention: Voting Officer—and ask for a Federal Post Card Application for Absentee Ballot (FPCA, otherwise known as Form 76) and a Signature Card.

Complete the FPCA, sign the Signature Card and return both to the Embassy or Consulate.

Embassy officials will notarize your FPCA—if required by your home state—and forward it to the proper election officials. (That's where the signature card comes in. It enables the American Embassy to notarize your FPCA if you cannot make it to have the notarizing done in person).

What happens next depends on where you maintain legal residence.

In some states, an FPCA sent to proper officials entitles you immediately to absentee registration and voting privileges.

In others, however, an FPCA is treated merely as a request for that state's *own* absentee ballot application forms, which you must then fill out and return before you can be registered to vote.

Detailed information on the absentee application requirements of individual states and territories is available in a Department of Defense pamphlet entitled *Voting Information, 1970,* copies of which are available for reference at all American Embassies and Consulates.

Errata

Last month the *Volunteer* reported that the 1971 Peace Corps budget request sent to Congress in February included funds for an increase in Volunteer readjustment pay from $75 per month to $100 per month.

That report was not correct.

Although Director Blatchford strongly recommended such an increase when he took office last year, the Bureau of the Budget, uptight about any increased government spending in the current inflationary period, said "No" (see Editor's Note following a letter from Volunteer Michael Morris on page 4, this issue).

In the same issue, we also reported that Blatchford, on his February trip to India, had met with V. V. Giri, President of that country.

Wrong.

Director Blatchford met with G. S. Pathak, Vice President of India.

For false hopes and false facts, our sincere apologies.

switch-board

Functions: To serve as an access device for members of the world-wide Peace Corps community.

An item or query will be listed if it:

. . . helps further the objectives of the Peace Corps;

. . . is useful to a large segment of the Peace Corps community;

. . . helps a Volunteer solve a problem more directly and quickly than might otherwise be possible.

Purpose: To encourage Peace Corps workers to share problems and solutions, develop their own answers, and find their own inspiration.

Procedure: Address all queries and items to:
Switchboard, *Volunteer* Magazine,
Room 622, Peace Corps, Washington,
D.C. 20525. Include a short evaluation.

Many Volunteers working in rural areas have found that the development of local crafts industries is one way of revitalizing subsistence communities and providing work for people who might otherwise flock to already overcrowded cities.

John Carter, a third-year TB worker in Korea, is currently trying to develop a small false eyelash industry at his post. But he has problems.

He writes:

"Suppose that you help someone develop and manufacture a good craft. One of the most strangling problems one has is trying to find ways to market that product in the States. You think, 'This (mat, basket, eyelash) looks great. I'll bet the people back home would really go for it.'

"Unfortunately," he continues, "finding ways of displaying or marketing these products is extremely difficult!"

His suggestion:

That someone establish a clearing house or find a marketing agent in the United States for arts, crafts and certain items which are made in connection with projects on which Volunteers are working.

If you have been working part or full-time assisting artisans or small industrial manufacturers, John would be interested in hearing from you. So would the Peace Corps, which is trying to develop a manual to help Volunteers learn basic administrative techniques so that they may teach these in turn to their friends and associates.

John would like answers to the following questions, from those of you who are involved:

1. What kind of artisan(s) or small industry have you been assisting?
2. What are the costs of production of the enterprise?
3. For how much does the product sell per single unit? in gross numbers?
4. How long have you known the maker(s)?
5. How is bookkeeping handled?
6. What is the monthly production capacity?
7. Send, if possible, a sample of work.

If you want to help, write:
John Carter
c/o Korea Desk
Peace Corps
Washington, D.C. 20525

Armistead P. Rood, a returned Volunteer from Africa, sent the following letter a couple of months ago:

On returning to school after a tour in Africa, I discovered a resource which I wish we had been aware of while overseas: a bilingual publication called *African Arts/Arts d'Afrique,* which publishes original works (poetry, short stories, plays, photographic essays, sculpture) by African writers and artists.

Although USIS distributes this excellent magazine in Africa, few issues filter down to the sub-professional level where much of Africa's creative talent resides, and few of the Volunteers who work in schools and elsewhere developing these talents are conscious of the opportunity the journal presents for their students.

The magazine runs an annual competition (with cash prizes) in all of the major art areas (including dance, for which motion pictures are requested). But due to a lack of exposure, only a few entries are received each year, mostly from professionals whose works have already been published.

While *African Arts/Arts d'Afrique* is devoted to the encouragement of arts in Africa, I would assume that similar publications exist for other areas of the world where the Peace Corps is active. It would be a shame if such

opportunities, as are presented by these journals, were to be lost because the Peace Corps is unaware of them, or does not have the time or interest to describe them to Volunteers who might wish to find such an outlet for their students' creative talents.

Editor's note—The magazine should be available through your local USIS representative. For further information write: Editor, African Arts/Arts d'Afrique, *African Studies Center, UCLA, Los Angeles, Calif. 90024.*

Switchboard *is interested in learning of other resources of this kind.*

The returned Volunteers of Colombia I Community Development are planning a Tenth Anniversary reunion for June, 1971. If you belonged to that group, and are interested in the reunion concept, write: Michael O. Willson, 3503 Coronado Drive, Louisville, Ky. 40222.

Editor's Note—Switchboard *is interested in hearing from other groups which might be planning Tenth Anniversary gatherings, and will help you get in touch.*

Most American children have at some time seen or built plastic models of cars, boats, airplanes, or space vehicles.

Not so children of developing nations.

Larry Miller, a returned Volunteer who taught basic mathematics and physics to secondary school students in the Fiji Islands, has found such models to be stimulating teaching tools.

Several months ago Miller wrote representatives of the Hobby Industry Association of America asking them to donate several model kits of space vehicles to his school. They did.

Miller supplemented these with booklets from the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA).

The response of his students, he reports, was "incredible."

For the first time, Miller thinks, they were able to comprehend the reality of space flight and the industrial age.

Assembling the kits—with discussion of each step—gave them a better grasp of mathematics and physics principles.

And the careful use of instruction sheets accompanying the models in some cases helped students improve their vocabulary and comprehension of scientific English.

Miller is not the only one enthusiastic about the possible use of model kits in the teaching of science.

So is the Hobby Industry Association, which has agreed to make a limited number of kits available, at no cost, to other Peace Corps Volunteer teachers.

If you are interested, write directly to: The Blankfort Group, 8467 Beverly Boulevard, Los Angeles, Calif. 90048.

In your request for kits list the age of your students, their grade level and the type of kit required (automobile, ship—sail or modern—airplane, or space vehicle—Apollo, lunar module, Mercury capsule, Gemini capsule, 21st Century concepts, etc.)

The Hobby Association will provide the kits and pay all carrying charges, but it cannot handle the formalities of import customs. Before requesting a kit, you should first clear it with local customs officials as tax-free educational material. Then, when you send in your request, enclose any customs papers needed to expedite delivery.

Because of the limited quantity of kits available, requests will be handled on a first-come, first-served basis.

Function: To provide helpful housekeeping and medical information to members of the overseas Peace Corps community.

Purpose: To encourage Peace Corps Volunteers to share housekeeping and medical problems and solutions.

Procedure: If you have a tested idea or suggestion you think would be of use to other Volunteers, write to Survival, *Volunteer* Magazine, Room 622, Peace Corps, Washington, D.C. 20525. Include as much factual information relating to your item as possible. Pictures are even better.

On April 4, 1666, famed London diarist Samuel Pepys returned home from the City and wrote:

"Today being washing day, dined on cold meat."

Many Volunteers will know what he meant. In most of the developing world, washing is a real drag, time-consuming and inefficient. The global village still does its laundry largely by hand.

What are the alternatives, we wondered?

We asked Dale Fritz, a Peace Corps agricultural specialist and former Volunteer for Technical Assistance (VITA), who has years of experience overseas.

As it turned out, Fritz himself is the father of a simple,hand-operated washing machine that has been featured for years in the Agency for International Development's (AID) *Village Technology Handbook*.

His device consists of the following elements (see drawings):

—a cylindrical wash tub;
—an agitator; and
—a cover.

The washer was first developed by Fritz several years ago when he was working as a technical consultant in Afghanistan, a country in which tinsmiths abound, and metalworking is a traditional industry dating back thousands of years. His prototype is built primarily of heavy, galvanized iron.

The following tools and materials are required:

Tinsnips;
Pliers;
Hammer;
Soldering equipment;

Galvanized iron sheeting (the heaviest available):

140 cm. x 70 cm. for tub;
100 cm. x 50 cm. for lid and bottom;
36 cm. x 18 cm. for agitator;
Wooden handle: 4 cm. diameter; 140 cm. long;
Nails;
Rivets (optional).

Fritz says his washer was built without difficulty by Afghan tinsmiths. Metal tubs are found throughout the Near East, and a large Afghan funnel makes an ideal agitator.

But such knowledge may not be of much help to Volunteers elsewhere.

What are the variations, we asked Fritz.

Well . . .

The tub can be built out of just about anything, provided it holds water and a reasonable number of clothes: petroleum drums, wooden barrels, waste tins, even, he suggests, large calabashes or clay pots.

The agitator is more troublesome. To be truly effective, its shape must be conical, insists Fritz. But in a pinch a flat wooden disk could be substituted.

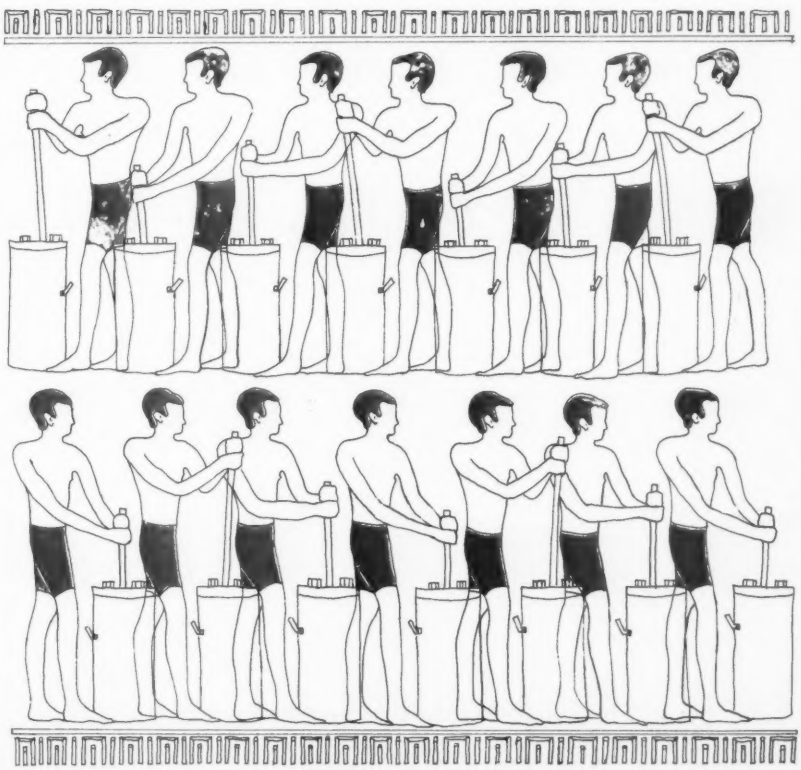
In building either the tub or the agitator, however, beware of rough surfaces or protruding objects (nails, rivet heads, jagged seams). When the washer is operated, clothes inside are churned about with considerable force. Any irregularity could chew up your prized drip-dry shirts in a single washing.

How does the contraption work?

Here are Fritz's instructions:

Fill the tub roughly three-quarters full of warm or hot water. Add soap and drop in your clothes. It is best to let them soak for 10 or 15 minutes. Then drop in the agitator assembly and put on the lid.

Now work the agitator handle up and down with a quick motion, but with



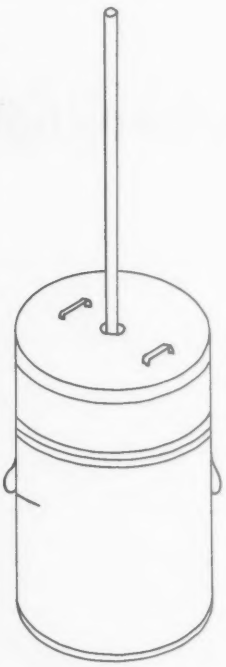
a slight pause between strokes.

The movement of the water will continue for a few seconds before additional agitation is needed.

On the upward stroke, the agitator should come completely out of the water. The agitator should not hit the bottom of the tub on the downward stroke, since this could damage both tub and clothes.

Fritz reports that five minutes of constant agitation are usually sufficient to wash an average, eight-pound load of clothes. But the agitation could be spread over a longer period of time. One Peace Corps couple in Afghanistan always used the washer at mealtime, agitating their clothes on trips from table to stove.

Once the clothes are washed, the hot water is drained, and cold rinse water is poured back in. Two rinse cycles are recommended.



The advantages of the Fritz hand-operated washer are simplicity, ease of operation (compared, say, to pounding clothes on a rock in a moving stream), kindness to your clothes and relative efficiency.

The principle disadvantage—and it is a major one—is the machine's water requirement: 10 to 15 gallons for each cycle. Moreover, the water must be hot (unless you have cold water soap on hand).

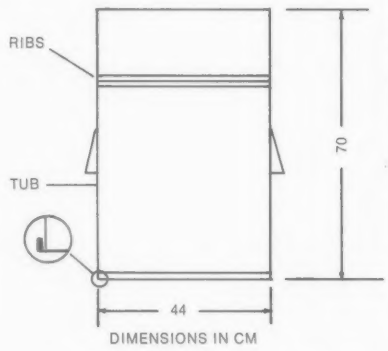
What is the operating principle of the machine, we asked Fritz.

"Agitation, just agitation," he replied.

"You could take a stick and stand there and stir it," he added. "It's just the motion of the water. The clothes don't even have to move at all . . . It's just the water moving back and forth through the clothing that does the cleaning. The soap breaks down the dirt; and the water carries it away."

Well, we asked, if that is the principle, are there any other solutions to the washing problem that are simpler than yours?

Sure, he said. If you have a vehicle, throw your clothes into some kind of a closed container—like a milk can—add soap and hot water and put the container onto the back of your machine. Leave it there all day as you make your rounds—preferably over the roughest available roads—and when you get back in the evening you'll have a load of clean clothes.



That method has been used by bachelor ranchers in the western United States for years.

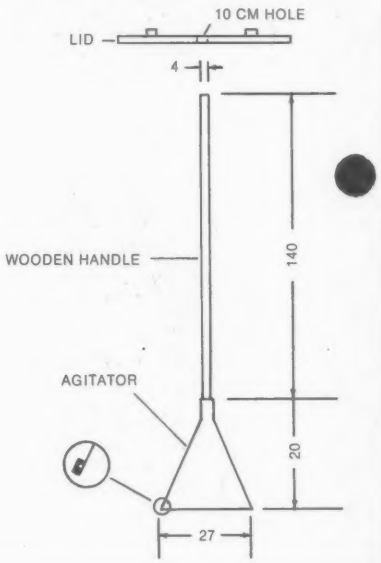
While Fritz's hand-operated washer may be the simplest such device, it is not the only one. Americans overseas have toyed with their laundry problems for nearly two decades. Several devices have been built for use in developing countries. All of them make use of various types of agitators.

Most designs we have seen are hand-powered. But Fritz says during the Second World War American GI's used everything from windmills (in the south Pacific) to Jeep motors.

VITA has several designs available for the asking, and some of them may be more suitable for your locale.

For further information write:

VITA, Inc.
College Campus
Schenectady, New York 12308.



Volunteer

Please print all information in capital letters on the lines and inside the boxes provided. Place only one letter or digit in a box. Leave a blank box between words. Abbreviate as necessary.

Change of Address

Effective date _____

MR. MRS. MISS MR. & MRS. (circle one)

Name _____

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